

**We claim:**

1. Isolated substantially purified stabilized beta-catenin protein, or fragments thereof.
- 5 2. Isolated DNA that encodes substantially purified stabilized beta-catenin protein, or fragments thereof.
3. Isolated DNA that encodes substantially purified stabilized beta-catenin protein, or fragments thereof, wherein said isolated DNA is cDNA.
4. An isolated substantially purified protein complex comprising purified  
10 stabilized beta-catenin protein, or fragments thereof, and a transcription factor.
5. An isolated substantially purified protein complex as described in claim 4, wherein said transcription factor is a member of the Lef/Tcf family.
6. A method of diagnosing for disease based on unwanted cell growth comprising determining the presence of stabilized beta-catenin in said cells.
- 15 7. A method as described in claim 6 wherein said disease is cancer.
8. A method as described in claim 6 wherein said cancer is melanoma.
9. A method of identifying compounds that inhibit unwanted cell growth comprising assaying for compounds that prevent the formation of a complex comprising beta-catenin and a transcription factor.
- 20 10. A method of identifying compounds that inhibit unwanted cell growth as described in claim 9 wherein said transcription factor is a member of the Lef/Tcf family.
11. A method of identifying compounds that inhibit unwanted cell growth as described in claim 10 wherein said transcription factor is Lef.
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